



American Woodcock

The American woodcock, also known as timberdoodle, (*Scolopax minor*) is a short-legged bird with a long bill and brown mottled plumage. This is a hard-to-find bird in the state of Missouri; one has to spend ample time afield searching for the woodcock. The best time for viewing the American woodcock is in the spring while the males are courting the females.

The males' spectacular display of courtship begins in mid-February at dawn or dusk. Their courting takes place in old fields where they take to the air to perform an acrobatic display for nearby females.

I have witnessed this myself. Males start off with a loud "peent" sound before they take to the air ascending up to 100 yards high. On their descent, they perform a spiraling, zigzagging motion with a twittering sound that is caused by the wind traveling through the primary feathers on their wings. Male woodcocks will continue this display of courtship for several weeks.

American woodcock



The best way to encounter this magnificent display of courtship is to take to old brushy fields at dusk with flashlights. Once you are in the field, stand patiently, listen for the loud "peent", and slowly make your way toward where the woodcock was heard. With your flashlight, shine the ground in order to see the reflection of the bird's eyes. Once located, stand patiently and wait for the courtship show to begin!

I hope you are able to try this yourself and enjoy the majestic creatures that Missouri has to offer!

TYLER McCANN, forestry resource aide

Where Can I Go to See Woodcock Courtship Displays?

Of course there are never any guarantees, but focus on finding old fields and forest openings. Here are some suggestions to start your search:

- August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area (St. Charles County): Visit the prairie reconstruction area northwest of the main office, or the recently burned old-field north of lakes 1, 2, and 15.
- Weldon Spring Conservation Area (St. Charles County): Park at the Prairie Lake parking lot and walk to the fields nearby.
- William R. Logan Conservation Area (Lincoln County)
- William G. and Erma Parke White Memorial Wildlife Area (Lincoln County)
- Little Lost Creek Conservation Area (Warren County)
- Little Indian Creek Conservation Area (Franklin and Washington Counties)
- Pea Ridge Conservation Area (Washington County)

Jay Henges Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center

1100 Antire Road, High Ridge, MO 63049 • mdc.mo.gov/node/299



From the east/St. Louis
I-44 west to Beaumont Antire Road, exit 269. Left over I-44 to Antire Road. Right on Antire. One hundred feet to entrance. Left into driveway.

From the west/Eureka
I-44 east to Beaumont Antire Road, exit 269. Follow exit lane around to top.

HOURS:

September 1–April 30
Wednesday–Sunday: 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

May 1–August 31
Wednesday: 1–7:30 p.m.
Thursday–Sunday: 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Programs are free. Call **636-938-9548** or email henges.range@mdc.mo.gov with your name and phone number to sign up for a program requiring registration. Up to two reservations are allowed per registration; groups should contact the range for more information. If you are unable to attend, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list. Interpretive services are available for those with hearing loss with 5 days notice.

*There are over
600,000 hunters
in Missouri.*

Basic Shotgun Shell Reloading

Feb 1 • Saturday • 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

(Ages 10 and up)

Reloading is a hobby that can bring lots of personal satisfaction and enjoyment – it can also save you money! Each student is taught reloading safety, shotgun shell components, using the reloading manual and reloading data, equipment, and the shotgun shell reloading process. This beginning class is hands-on and you will actually load high quality shells. An adult must accompany anyone under age 16. (Reservations begin January 2.)

Beginning Handgun, Part 1 and 2

Feb 6 and 8 • Thursday • 6–8 p.m. and Saturday • 8–9:30 a.m.

(Ages 16 and up)

This two-part program will include classroom instruction on handgun operation, shooting fundamentals, safety, maintenance, and safe storage. Although equipment and ammunition will be provided, you may bring your own handgun and ammunition to the Saturday morning live-fire session. An adult must accompany anyone under age 18. (Reservations begin January 6.)

Basic Home Firearm Safety

Feb 11 • Tuesday • 5:30–9:30 p.m.

(Ages 9 and up)

Have a spouse or family member that hunts or has firearms and you would like more info on safety and proper storage to keep yourself, children, and others safe in your home? This non-shooting course teaches students basic knowledge, skills, and explains the attitude necessary for the safe handling and proper storage of firearms and ammunition in the home. An adult must accompany anyone under age 16. (Reservations begin January 11.)

Antler Scoring

Feb 22 • Saturday • 9 a.m.–noon

(All ages)

Now that your antlers have dried for the required 60 days, it's time to check the official score of that big rack. We will have official scorers on duty. You may also bring shed antlers to be scored. Antlers do not have to be from this past season, any previous rack can be scored. No reservations required.

Youth .22 Rifle

Feb 22 • Saturday • 8–9:30 a.m.

(Ages 9–15)

Interested young people who have no experience shooting .22 rifles are invited to participate in this session on learning safety and the proper techniques of shooting .22 caliber rimfire rifles in a controlled safe environment. Firearms, ammunition, and safety equipment is provided. (Reservations begin January 22.)

Introduction to Firearms

Feb 25 • Tuesday • 6:30–9:30 p.m.

(Ages 11 and up)

Let's take a look at various types of firearms including rifles, shotguns, and handguns. We will examine the various types of actions and provide a hands-on demonstration of their working mechanisms. The presentation will include basic safety, home security, and general maintenance. This is a classroom program and does not include live shooting. If you are not familiar or comfortable with firearms, this is an informative, educational introduction to firearms without the noise. (Reservations begin January 25.)

Busch Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center

2360 Hwy D, St. Charles, MO 63304 • mdc.mo.gov/node/270

Survival Tactics for the Outdoorsman, Part 1 and 2

Feb 12 and 13 • Wednesday and Thursday • 6–9 p.m.

(Ages 11 and up. Youth ages 11–16 must be accompanied by an adult.)

Are you prepared if an emergency happens during an outdoor adventure? This class will teach the basic survival necessities when stranded, lost, or injured in the woods. Our experts will go over finding food, water purification, shelter, and other aspects that will help you survive. This is a two part course, you must attend part one in order to attend part two. Class will be held at the August A. Busch CA regional office classroom. (Reservations begin January 13.)

Basic Handgun

Feb 19 and 20 • Wednesday and Thursday • 6–9 p.m.

(Ages 16 and up)

This class will introduce you to the basics of shooting a handgun. Wednesday is the classroom portion at the August A. Busch CA regional office building. We will cover safety, handgun selection, actions, stance, grip, aiming, and more. Thursday is the live fire portion at the August A. Busch Shooting Range and Outdoor Education facility. (Reservations begin January 20.)

Youth .22 Rifle

Feb 22 • Saturday • 7:30–9:30 a.m.

(Ages 10–15 must be accompanied by an adult)

This program is an introduction youths to rifle shooting without the range being open to the general public. We will start with a short seminar that will cover safety, rifle parts, stance, aiming and more. We will then do some live fire. This program will be located at the August A. Busch Shooting Range and Outdoor Education facility. All firearms and ammunition will be provided. (Reservations begin January 22.)



Women/Youth Pheasant Clinic and Hunt

Feb 27 • Thursday • 6–8 p.m.

March 1 • Saturday • Women Hunt

March 8 • Saturday • Youth Hunt

(Ages 11 and up. Youth ages 11–15 must be accompanied by an adult)

This program will introduce new hunters to the sport of upland hunting with emphasis on ringneck pheasants. We will start with a seminar on Thursday covering pheasant biology, habitat, safety, firearms, ammunition, hunting methods and more. We will head to the field for an actual pheasant hunt on March 1 for women and March 8 for youth. You must be Hunter Education certified, and not have attended this program in the past. The clinic will be held at the August A. Busch CA regional office building. The hunts will be held at the Missouri Gun and Quail Club located in Wright City. Details of the hunts will be provided at the Thursday evening seminar. (Reservations begin January 27.)



From I-64/40 take Hwy 94 south to Hwy D; turn west on Hwy D for approximately 5 miles. The area entrance is on the south side of Hwy D.

HOURS:

December 1–March 31

Monday, Tuesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday: 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

April 1–November 30

Monday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday: 10 a.m.–4 p.m. and Tuesday: 2–8 p.m.

Programs are free. Call **636-441-4554** to register Monday through Friday 8 a.m.–5 p.m. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list. Interpretive services are available for those with hearing loss with 5 days notice.



Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center

11715 Cragwold Road, Kirkwood, MO 63122 • mdc.mo.gov/node/271



From I-44 east take the Watson Road exit and turn left on Geyer. Cross over the bridge and turn left on Cragwold Road. Follow one mile to the entrance.

HOURS:

Building: Tuesday–Saturday: 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

Area: Daily: 8 a.m.–8 p.m. DST
8 a.m.–6 p.m. CST

Programs are free. Call **314-301-1500** to register. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list. Interpretive services are available for those with hearing loss with 5 days notice.

How Does Nature Clean Up? How Can We Help?

Feb 11 • Tuesday • 6–8 p.m.

(Adults and Families 7 and up)

By design, nature cleans up after itself in all capacities. Examples are water purification, scavenging dead plants and animals, and soil fertilization. In this program, we will investigate some of the creatures responsible for these tremendous tasks. We will also discuss different ways to mimic nature in our own conservation efforts. Bring a flashlight and dress appropriately for a nice winter hike! (Reservations begin January 28.)

Forest Food Chains

Feb 11 • Tuesday • 9:30–11:30 a.m.

(Ages 6 and up)

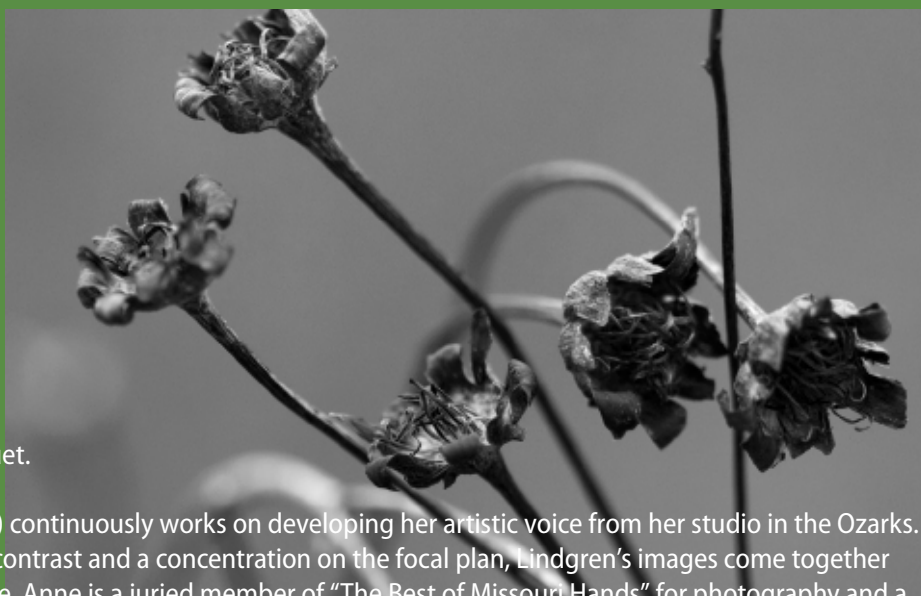
In the forest, among the fish and the wildlife, who eats what? Further, how does the energy from sunshine end up in a bobcat? How does a tree help a rabbit breathe? Let's investigate nature's complex web of food chains and energy flow. Join in a special yarn-toss web game. Play with lots of nature puppets, ranging from armadillo to woodchuck. And while we're at it, since February 14 is coming up and since we love our forest, fish and wildlife, let's make them a creative, beautiful food-chain Valentine's card! Weather permitting, we will take a nature walk too. Siblings are welcome. (Reservations begin January 28.)

Hallway Exhibit Winter Photography by Anne Lindgren

February's photography display features the work of Anne Lindgren and focuses on the beauty found in the winter landscape composed of seed heads. Here is a short poem that highlights why Lindgren chose seed heads:

"Weed Study: A Meditation"

Looking beyond the obvious...
See its strength.
Supporting the bloom in procreation,
Protecting seed to maturity.
Understand its impermanent
Yet transformative nature,
Feeding wildlife and starting anew in
Spring.
In the moment, open to seeing,
Reveals the weed to be a beautiful bouquet.



Anne Lindgren (annelindgrendesign.com) continuously works on developing her artistic voice from her studio in the Ozarks. Using thoughtful composition, dramatic contrast and a concentration on the focal plan, Lindgren's images come together for an energy-producing visual experience. Anne is a juried member of "The Best of Missouri Hands" for photography and a long-standing member of the Meramec Hill Chapter of the Missouri Master Naturalist.

Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center

11715 Cragwold Road, Kirkwood, MO 63122 • mdc.mo.gov/node/271

February Isn't Just for Groundhogs!

It may be legend that the groundhog seeing his shadow means six more weeks of winter, but there are plenty of other activities in late winter besides the groundhog's sleepy emergence.

Other mammals busy with courtship and breeding include skunks, coyotes, river otters, opossums, and flying squirrels. A fun and common backyard sight is the antics of male whitetail rabbits fighting, chasing and jumping over one another.

Some birds are particularly busy this time of year. Bald eagles and great horned owls are sitting on eggs, while

screech owls search for a mate. American woodcocks begin their courtship by establishing "singing grounds" where they call for mates and leap into the air in a zigzagging, high-flying display. Northern cardinals begin singing on bright sunny days and mourning doves begin their flap and glide courtship flights. Turkey vultures and geese are actively migrating and robins arrive in flocks as the juncos migrate away.

Salamanders join in the fun by migrating to ponds from the forest on warm rainy nights, and the shrill peeping calls of spring peepers can be heard. Chorus

frogs call with a vibrating sound like running your thumb along the teeth of a comb.

Even insects get into the game. Boxelder bugs are seen on warm days, and snow fleas (springtails) begin to emerge on snowbanks as the weather turns mild.

Whether or not the groundhog sees his shadow, nature takes hold in many ways as new life is drawn into the landscape. Use the last few weeks of winter's cabin fever to discover some of the natural activities close to your home.

Forest Park Office

5595 Grand Drive, St. Louis, MO 63112 • mdc.mo.gov/node/10254



From I-44 take Kingshighway north to West Pine Blvd, turn left. Follow West Pine to Lindell, turn left. Continue on Lindell past Union Drive to Cricket, turn left. Take first right onto Grand Ave. The visitor's center is on the right.

HOURS:

Monday–Friday: 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

Programs are free. Call **314-877-1309** to sign up for a program requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list. Interpretive services are available for those with hearing loss with 5 days notice.

Homeschool Wildlife Ecology Series-Animals

Feb 18 • Tuesday • 10 a.m.–noon
(Ages 6–12)

This month, our School in the Field subject is Animal Ecology. Students engage in activities which highlight the relationships of Missouri animals to each other and their environment. Each lesson is divided into two age appropriate groups, 6 to 9 years and 10 to 12 years. Meet at the Dennis & Judith Jones Visitor and Education Center in Forest Park. Sign up for this session and the next two! Those are Aquatic Ecology on Tuesday, March 11, and Plant Ecology on Tuesday, April 22. Class size is limited. (Reservations are open.)



Healthy fish, forests, and wildlife make our communities better places to live and work.

Columbia Bottom Conservation Area

801 Strodtman Road, St. Louis, MO 63138 • mdc.mo.gov/node/298



From I-270 north, take the Riverview Drive exit (last Missouri exit); go north 2.8 miles. Riverview Drive becomes Columbia Bottom Road at its intersection with Larimore Road. The entrance is on the right-hand side.

HOURS:

Building: Wednesday–Friday: 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

Saturday–Sunday: 8 a.m.–4 p.m.

Area: One-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset except authorized activities.

Programs are free. Call **314-877-6014** to sign up for a program requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list. Interpretive services are available for those with hearing loss with 5 days notice.

Heart of the Matter

Feb 8 • Saturday • 10-11 a.m.

(Families)

Ever wonder what happens to all the ads and junk mail after you put them in the recycle bin? Let's get to the heart of the matter. Discover how these recyclables are turned into new school and office paper. Then with some grinding, grating and squeezing create a one-of-a-kind Valentine for someone special. Bring an old towel. (Reservations begin January 24.)

Howling for Their Sweethearts

Feb 14 • Friday • 6:30–8 p.m.

(Ages 7 and up)

It is Valentine's Day and the full Snow Moon lights up the frosty night offering an excellent chance to hear the animals Lewis and Clark called "little prairie wolves". They sound eerie to some, but coyotes fill an important role in our wildlife community. Join us to look at their natural history via indoor presentation, examination of coyote artifacts and an outdoor walk. You may discover that they are just howling for their sweethearts. Dress for the weather. Meet at the Visitor Center. After our walk, we will reconvene indoors for some hot chocolate. (Reservations begin January 31.)



Coyotes

Starting Native Plants from Seed

Feb 15 • Saturday • 10–11:30 a.m.

(Ages 10 and up)

Many of us admire bright stands of Purple Coneflower, Butterfly Milkweed or White Wild Indigo. Not only are these native plants hardy and beautiful, they enrich our home landscapes and everyone's quality of life. Join our workshop on starting plants from native seed. Learn how to obtain and prepare native seeds for planting. Make starting containers from recyclables and plant seed in the containers you prepare. We will help each other discover nature by sharing ideas on using recyclable materials for raising native plants. (Reservations begin February 1.)



Purple coneflower plant, seedling and seeds

Columbia Bottom Trading Post

Feb 17 • Monday • 9:30–11 a.m.

(Ages 10 and under)

Become a great fur trader at the Columbia Bottom Trading Post. But, you must first capture those "furbearers" to have something to trade. Find out why trapping is so important to Missouri as you enter the world of furbearers, trappers, and bartering. (Reservations begin February 3.)

August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area

2360 Hwy D, St. Charles, MO 63304 • mdc.mo.gov/node/300

Get Your Smokey On!

Feb 5 • Wednesday • 10–11 a.m.

(Ages 3–6)

Learn the true story of Smokey Bear and how he became a symbol of fire protection. Learn the five rules of fire safety so that your family can be just like Smokey Bear. (Reservations begin January 22.)



Orienteering: Compass and Laser to Find Your Way

Feb 7 • Friday • 6–9:30 p.m.

(Families 10 and up)

Have you ever hiked in the woods at night without a trail? Learn off-trail navigation skills with our Naturalists for a unique family experience! Navigate to landmarks using a compass and laser to point the way. Ideal for first-time participants to orienteering and navigation programs. Effort = Mild to Moderate: two to three mile off-trail hiking over gentle hills. Thick vegetation and briars present but can be avoided. (Reservations begin January 24.)

Winter Wildlife Hike - Dresser Island CA

Feb 15 • Saturday • 9 a.m.–3 p.m.

(Ages 12 and up)

Break out of winter cabin fever! Discover a place to see pelicans, ducks, geese, eagles, hawks, and more! Dresser Island Conservation Area is a winter wildlife haven located near West Alton in St. Charles County. Collect bird sightings data to participate in the annual Great Backyard Bird Count. Effort = Moderate to Strenuous: 6.5 mile flat, open hiking. However, winter weather can be more strenuous. An optional 3 mile hike is available. (Reservations begin January 31.)

Owl Prowl

Feb 15 • Saturday • 6:30–8 p.m.

(All Ages)

Ever wonder what owl might be hooting outside your window at night? Learn about Missouri's resident and visiting owls, listen to calls, and go on a short hike in search of these secretive nocturnal predators. (Reservations begin January 31.)

Native Plants for Homeowners Workshop

Feb 22 • Saturday • 1:30–3 p.m.

(Adults)

New to native plants and not sure where to start? Naturally resilient native grasses, flowers, shrubs, and trees are great solutions to common gardening problems. They also attract butterflies, hummingbirds, and song birds. Learn landscape design ideas, sources to purchase plants, and more. (Reservations begin February 7.)

Orienteering: Emphasis on Topographic Maps

Feb 23 • Sunday • noon–5 p.m.

(Adults and Families 12 and up)

Are you physically fit, looking for a challenging off-trail experience? Hike 4 to 6 miles to read landforms on a map. Find man-made landmarks like graveyards and homestead remnants in the steep and rugged valleys of Weldon Spring Conservation Area. Effort = Moderate to Strenuous: off-trail hiking in steep, rocky forests. Must have prior skill using a compass. (Reservations begin February 10.)



From I-64/40 take Hwy 94 south to Hwy D; turn west on D for approximately two miles. The area entrance is on the north side of Hwy D.

HOURS:

Building: Monday–Friday: 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

Area: Daily: 4 a.m.–10 p.m.

Programs are free. Call **636-441-4554** to sign up for a program requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list. Interpretive services are available for those with hearing loss with 5 days notice.

What is the Great Backyard Bird Count?

The GBBC is an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are.

Rockwoods Reservation

2751 Glencoe Road, Wildwood, MO 63038 • mdc.mo.gov/node/272



From I-44 take Hwy 109 north 4 miles to Woods Avenue; left on Woods Avenue, then immediately right on Glencoe Road. From Manchester Road take Hwy 109 south 2 miles to Woods Avenue; right on Woods Avenue, then immediately right on Glencoe Road.

HOURS:

Building: Monday–Friday: 8 a.m.–5 p.m.
Area: Sunrise to one-half hour after sunset except authorized activities.

Programs are free. Call **636-458-2236** to sign up for a program requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list. Interpretive services are available for those with hearing loss with 5 days notice.

Winter Hiking in the Woods

Feb 8 • Saturday • 1–3:30 p.m.

(Adults and Families Ages 10 and up)

Hike the 3.2 mile Lime Kiln Loop to learn of the lime kiln that operated over 100 years ago. Search for winter wildlife and early signs of spring. Effort = Moderate: natural surface with a few short, steep hills. (Reservations begin January 24.)



Maple Sugar Festival

Feb 1 • Saturday • 10 a.m.–3 p.m.

(All Ages)

It's maple sugar time! Experience conservation success and forest resources at their finest – and sweetest! Visit the Sugar Bush to see trees tapped. Boil sap down at the Three Kettle Station and Sugar Shack. Taste delicious syrup, sugar on snow taffy, and pure maple sugar. (No reservations necessary. Parking available on-site and off-site via a shuttle bus.)



Homeschool Special: Maple Sugaring

Two separate sessions available:

Feb 13 • Thursday • noon–1:30 p.m.

Feb 19 • Wednesday • noon–1:30 p.m.

(All Ages)

Embark on a Missouri tradition. Learn the history of maple sugaring, visit the sugar bush to collect sap, and learn how to boil it down into syrup. Dress for the weather as the entire program is outdoors and part of the trail is not stroller accessible. (Reservations begin January 30.)

Native Plants for Homeowners Workshop

Feb 22 • Saturday • 9:30–11 a.m.

(Adults)

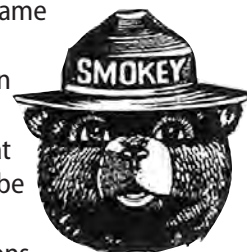
New to native plants and not sure where to start? Naturally resilient native grasses, flowers, shrubs, and trees are great solutions to common gardening problems. They also attract butterflies, hummingbirds, and song birds. Learn landscape design ideas, sources to purchase plants, and more. (Reservations begin February 7.)

Get Your Smokey On!

Feb 26 • Wednesday • 10–11 a.m.

(Ages 3–6)

Learn the true story of Smokey Bear and how he became a symbol of fire protection. Learn the five rules of fire safety so that your family can be just like Smokey Bear. (Reservations begin February 11.)



After School Session: Maple Sugaring

Feb 27 • Thursday • 4–5:30 p.m.

(All Ages)

Did your child's school miss out on a maple sugar school field trip? No problem. Learn the history of maple sugaring, visit the sugar bush to collect sap, and learn to boil it down into syrup. Dress for the weather as the entire program is outdoors and part of the trail is not stroller accessible. (Reservations begin February 13.)